

**A** GUIDE TO  
EMPLOYING & RETAINING  
**P**ERSONAL **A**SSISTANTS

*Everything You Need to Know to Be a  
Successful Employer*

# REFACE

A personal assistant plays a very important role in the life of any individual who is unable to perform self-care tasks. The personal assistant interacts with you on a very personal and close level. This guide has been put together to offer you assistance and guidance in all aspects of preparing for and managing your personal support services. The guide includes how to advertise and find personal assistants. It covers how to interview; how to decide the best possible match for your personal needs; and how to train, coach, and manage your personal assistant. It also makes suggestions to help you to have a successful employment experience such as making a well thought out list of the most appropriate persons to serve as your personal assistant and recommending good communication skills. Also included are sample forms, information on record keeping, and important information on the Fair Labor Standards Act that will help guide you in managing and keeping a personal assistant.

Note that when we use the term “personal assistant,” we are talking about anybody who provides personal supports to you. Some people call them “personal care workers,” “direct support professionals” or “personal attendants.”

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

# WHY CHOICE IS IMPORTANT

The idea that individuals who receive government services should be able to choose the kinds of services that are best for them has been around for a long time. But only in the last ten years or so has the idea started to become a reality.

It started with recognizing that states were spending a lot of money, but a lot of the time the people being served didn't think they were getting the services they needed most. Decisions had been made along the way that created a system that was more concerned with budget limits and the need to do things the same way from region-to-region. The focus of making sure the individuals being served got the specific help they needed had somehow gotten lost.

The idea that people should have choice is the main idea behind consumer-direction (sometimes called "self-determination"). When governments started hearing what people were saying about choice, they looked at their programs to figure out where having choice might make the most difference. The obvious answer was that people should at least be able to have a choice about services they get in their own home.



Personal assistant services are some of the most important services individuals get. These services help the individual with the most basic daily chores (like bathing, dressing, cooking and cleaning) so that the individual can continue to live in his/her own house, go to work if he/she wants, and stay healthy and safe. In Alabama, personal assistant services are called both personal care and personal assistant services.

When a personal assistant who works for a provider agency comes into your home, he/she is going to do those chores the agency tells them to do. He/she may or may not listen to any suggestions or preferences you might have.

With choice and consumer-directed services, you are the one (or a representative you have selected) who interviews, selects, hires, and trains the personal assistant. You also set the schedule and give daily instructions to the personal assistant, supervise and decide how well the personal assistant is doing the assigned tasks.

Making decisions about how to manage your personal assistant services can be overwhelming. There are so many things to consider, and many people have never really stopped to think about them. In this handbook, tools have been developed that will assist you in considering the most important issues, making the necessary decisions, and supporting the implementation of a successful personal support plan.

# **F**REQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT USING A **PERSONAL ASSISTANT**

*By now, you have either chosen to manage or indicated an interest in managing your own worker services. This is a big step and there are several questions that people in your position tend to ask as they prepare to become an employer or supervisor of a personal assistant. Hopefully, the following questions and answers section will answer some of the questions you have.*

## **What are Personal Assistant Services?**

Personal Assistant Services (PAS), provide help with certain essential daily needs, like bathing, dressing, meal preparation and housekeeping for those who qualify.

## **What will my responsibilities be if I manage my own Personal Assistant Services?**

You will be responsible for the day-to-day management of your worker's activities in your home. You will:

- decide how you want to advertise for and recruit your worker
- conduct interviews and document your selection of the personal assistant you want to hire
- show the worker how you would like the tasks to be done and provide guidance when needed
- set and manage the worker's work schedule to use the hours in your service plan to best suit your needs
- review and sign off on the worker's time sheet before it is turned in for payment
- evaluate the job performance of your worker
- Be responsible for the following tasks if you are participating in a self-directed program:
  - Deciding how much the personal assistant will be paid

- Working with the financial management agency to handle all the business details such as paying taxes and doing the payroll.

### **What are my legal responsibilities?**

You are responsible for training your workers so they know how to do their jobs safely and well. You are responsible for asking them to do only those things that are approved activities. Be sure you are not asking them to do anything that is unsafe, illegal or against program rules. You are also responsible for providing a safe working environment. These are your responsibilities because any time someone comes to your home to provide a service (your worker, the postman, a plumber, or even a guest) you could be liable for any injury that results from unsafe conditions. If your worker is hurt because you didn't provide adequate training or asked him/her to do something unsafe or illegal, you could be held responsible for some, if not all, of the compensation if the worker chooses to take legal action against you.

### **Can I have a relative or friend as my worker?**

If you are paying for your own services or if you are in a self-directed program, you can certainly hire a relative or friend to be your worker. Otherwise, it depends on the program you are enrolled. Check with your counselor or case manager if you are unsure whether your program allows this because different programs might have limitations on this. The relative or friend will usually have to pass a background check and meet other qualifications required by the Alabama Medicaid Agency.

### **What if I choose to manage my own personal assistant, but need some help to do it?**

Training may be available from local organizations, like an independent living center or a state agency or through the program you are enrolled in. You may have to be eligible to participate in certain training workshops. Contact your local independent living center, state agency or case manager if you have one to see if there are training workshops available near you. You will also have tools like this handbook to refer to.

You may also let someone else you trust act as your representative to do the things you are not comfortable with. You may take care of all the responsibilities yourself if you want to. But if you want someone you are close to, like a relative or trusted friend, to help you manage the day-to-day work of your worker, you may do so.

### **Can my worker do anything I want him/her to?**

There are some rules and limitations that will apply depending on the type of program you may be enrolled in. If you have a support coordinator or case manager, he/she can help you identify what are and what are not allowable tasks for your personal assistant to perform.

# GETTING STARTED

*There are many steps to take to prepare for hiring and managing a personal assistant. You will find as you read through this manual that much of it is common sense. So this manual serves as a guideline for which steps you should consider first. The manual will also be a reminder of those things that you already know or need a little bit more information about.*

*Before you get started, it might be helpful to think about the people in your life and how they might be able to support you as you get more involved in managing your own supports. We've attached a tool, called a Support Network Checklist, you can use to write*

**SEE APPENDIX I FOR THE SUPPORT NETWORK CHECKLIST**

*down the names of people you know and how they might support you.*

*Once you are ready to start, the first thing to do is to think about what you are looking for in a personal assistant and then write a job description. A form has been developed to help you think about those characteristics and skills you want your personal assistant to have. This will also help you in writing the job description.*

**SEE APPENDIX A FOR “MY IDEAL PERSONAL ASSISTANT CHECKLIST”**

## **WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION ....**

**A Good Job Description Clearly Defines Your Expectations of the Specific Duties and Services That You Require from Your Personal Assistant so That There Are No Misunderstandings About the Job Duties or How You Expect Them to be Performed.**

The best way to manage your personal assistant begins with looking at how you want to perform your daily living activities and why you want to employ a personal assistant to help you with these activities. Thinking about what you can and cannot do as well as your likes and dislikes will help you to hire the right person to work with you as your personal assistant. Writing a job description for your personal assistant is much easier after looking at your needs and your lifestyle.

## **LISTED BELOW ARE REASONS TO CONSIDER DEVELOPING A JOB DESCRIPTION:**

- To have a current list and description of your needs and lifestyle
- To provide information about the job when interviewing applicants
- To keep the interview on track and only about job duties



- To provide a true picture of the job requirements to those interviewing for the job
- To provide a checklist of duties and responsibilities after employment for both the personal assistant and you
- To provide valuable feedback for the personal assistant when the Performance Evaluation is done
- To keep your expectations of the personal assistant clear and focused
- To help settle any disagreement you and the personal assistant might have regarding

**SEE APPENDIX B FOR A SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION**

job duties and responsibilities

# **L**OCATING A PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Locating a personal assistant can be done in many ways. Please keep in mind that you want to advertise locally, but that travel and relocation are possible with some potential employees. Listed below are different ways of advertising for your personal assistant:

- FAMILY AND FRIENDS - WORD OF MOUTH
- LOCAL NEWSPAPERS
- LOCAL NEWSLETTERS - SUPPORT GROUPS OR DISABILITY GROUPS
- SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES
- HEALTH CARE AGENCIES
- EMPLOYMENT OR CAREER SERVICES OFFICES
- NON-PROFIT AGENCIES
- REHABILITATION CENTERS - STATE AND PRIVATE
- UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, OR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
- HOSPITAL OR UNIVERSITY NURSING SCHOOLS
- CHURCHES OR CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS
- ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES OR NURSING HOMES
- PERSONAL ASSISTANT SERVICES REGISTRY

## WRITING AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANT

When writing your advertisement, keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way to write the “ad,” but that you need to keep in mind just exactly who and what you are looking for when you write it. Remember that you want your ad to attract the attention of possible workers. Write your ad in a positive, interesting way that causes someone to want to respond. Keep it short, direct, clear, and easy to understand. **DO NOT ADVERTISE THAT YOU LIVE ALONE OR GIVE YOUR ADDRESS IN THE ADVERTISEMENT.** Use descriptive words such as dependable, reliable, honest, to describe your ideal worker. Also, check with local papers to learn the best time to run your ad or with agencies and businesses

if you are advertising by flyers. If creating a flyer advertisement or using the newspaper or local newsletters, you might want to consider including any of the following information that reflects your needs:

- WHO...ARE YOU LOOKING FOR
- WHAT...THE JOB IS
- WHEN...THE HOURS ARE
- WHERE...THE JOB IS
- PAY...HOW MUCH
- TRAINING NEEDED
- CONTACT PERSON'S NAME
- PHONE NUMBER TO CALL
- PREFERRED TIME TO CALL
- ANY OTHER INFORMATION

## **SAMPLE ADS .....\***

**Help woman with disability  
\$9.00/hr in Homewood; assist in  
basic personal care and getting to  
school. No early morning hours!  
Start at 10 A.M.; must be non-  
smoker who likes cats. Call  
Michelle – xxx-xxx-xxxx. Leave  
message on answering machine.**

**Part-time Personal Assistant  
Needed. Training provided.  
\$8.50/hr up to 20 hours per week.  
Help young guy with disability  
with personal care needs and  
errands. Computer skills and  
interest in rap music a must.  
Close to bus line. Call Rob at:  
xxx-xxx-xxxx.**

**Need someone 40 hours a week....  
Full-time work with health  
insurance and other benefits.  
Personal Assistant needed to help  
with dressing, bathing, laundry,  
light housekeeping. Need to be  
willing to go to work with me to  
assist in typing, making phone calls  
in a great work environment. Must  
love dogs! \$9.00/hour. Call Tracey  
if interested at xxx-xxx-xxxx.**

***\*Be aware that the cost for ads are often set by the number of words or lines. Your ad may need to be shorter based on your budget.***

# § SELECTING A PERSONAL ASSISTANT

## SCREENING APPLICANTS BY TELEPHONE.....

Talking to possible personal assistants by phone can save a lot of time for both you and the applicant. Know what you want to ask the applicant, and keep a list of questions with a pen and paper close by your phone. Points to remember when conducting a phone interview are:

- Discuss the important points of the job
- Find out information about the applicant
- Get a first impression of the person

## TIPS FOR SCREENING:

- ALWAYS TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS AND YOUR FIRST REACTION.
- Smile so that your voice sounds friendly over the phone.

- Ask if the person has reliable transportation and can be at work on time.
- Inform the applicant if you intend to complete a criminal background check.
- Give a brief job description and include the hours and pay scale. Now is the time to learn if both are acceptable to the applicant. This keeps you from interviewing someone who is not really interested in the job and saves you time.
- Set up a time to conduct the face-to-face interview. You may want to consider mailing and having them complete a job application in advance of the interview.
- If you think you might have some difficulty communicating, have someone you trust assist you.

**SEE APPENDIX C FOR A SAMPLE APPLICATION**

### **THE INTERVIEW: TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW .....**

Before the interview, it will be helpful for you to think about and decide the personal qualities that you are looking for in a personal assistant and how you truly feel about the following:

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- TRUSTWORTHINESS
- DEPENDABILITY
- A SENSE OF HUMOR
- HONESTY
- COMPATIBILITY
- PRIDE
- SAME INTERESTS
- COMMUNICATION
- THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Other characteristics are listed in the My Ideal Assistant Checklist mentioned on page 9 and attached as APPENDIX A.

For the first interview meeting, it is wise to meet the applicant in a public place such as a library or church. If you choose to consider the person seriously for employment, then you might consider giving directions to your home. Also, you may want to think about having a family member or friend present during the first meeting.

**REMEMBER--YOU ARE INTERVIEWING A STRANGER AND SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT KNOW A LOT ABOUT YOU OR YOUR DISABILITY. PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING IN MIND:**

- ❖ Try to make the person as comfortable as possible.
- ❖ If you want to and are comfortable talking about it, explain your disability and why you are in need of personal assistant services.
- ❖ Provide a written job description and describe the types of tasks that you need assistance with and the hours that you need someone to work.
- ❖ Ask the person about current employment and past work history. Ask about the tasks performed on the jobs and what he/she liked or disliked about the jobs. Also ask reasons for leaving other employment.
- ❖ Ask about experience as a personal assistant and make sure that you are forming a sense of them as a person and as an employee.
- ❖ Make notes during the interview that you can look at later when trying to make a decision as to which applicant to employ.



- ❖ Explain how and when you will evaluate job performance. Include any benefits that you may have to offer such as time off, paid holidays, etc.
- ❖ Ask for at least two employment references.
- ❖ Give the person a chance to ask you question or to add other information that may be important.
- ❖ Thank the individual for his/her time and try to give a time frame if possible as to when you will contact them about your employment decision.

**BE VERY CAREFUL...**

**DO NOT HIRE ANYONE ON THE SPOT...**

**BE SURE TO CHECK REFERENCES AND...**

**MAKE SURE ALL QUALIFICATIONS ARE MET BEFORE YOU  
OFFER ANYONE EMPLOYMENT.**

**\*\*\*Note** that there are limitations to what employers can tell you about current and former employees without written consent from the employee. Legally, a former employer can only tell you the date the person began work; the date that they left employment; and if he/she is eligible for rehire. Check those references anyway....it will surprise you what you can hear in the reference's voice, regardless of the words being used.

### **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....**

*The following questions are designed to help you get to know more about the individual's lifestyle and personal habits that will hopefully fit your own.*

- **DO YOU DRIVE OR CAN YOU ASSIST ME WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?**
- **HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT GOING WITH ME ON ERRANDS?**
- **DO YOU HAVE A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE? (ONLY ASK IF DRIVING IS NECESSARY TO THE JOB).**
- **ARE YOU A GOOD COOK? WHAT DO YOU ENJOY COOKING?**
- **WHERE DO YOU LIKE TO SHOP FOR FOOD?**

- WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FOOD AND FAVORITE RESTAURANT?
- WOULD HELPING ME WITH ANY OF MY PERSONAL NEEDS MAKE YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE?
- WOULD HELPING ME USE THE BATHROOM BOTHER YOU?
- DO YOU SMOKE?
- WOULD YOU AGREE TO A RANDOM DRUG SCREEN OR TEST IF EMPLOYED?
- WHAT IS YOUR BEST TIME OF THE DAY? ARE YOU A MORNING PERSON OR A NIGHT PERSON?
- WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO FOR ENTERTAINMENT? DO YOU HAVE HOBBIES OR SPECIAL INTERESTS?
- DO YOU LIKE ACTIVITIES TO BE PLANNED AHEAD OF TIME OR DO YOU PREFER TO DO SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT THINGS?
- DO YOU LIKE MUSIC? WHAT KIND? WHAT VOLUME?
- DO YOU LIKE TV? WHICH PROGRAMS DO YOU LIKE MOST?
- ARE YOU A FLEXIBLE PERSON? PLEASE GIVE EXAMPLES.
- IF YOUR PLANS HAVE TO CHANGE AT THE LAST MINUTE, ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT?
- DO YOU LIKE PETS?
- DO YOU LIKE TO READ? WHAT DO YOU READ MOST?
- IF I NEED HELP READING, WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO READ TO ME?

- IF I NEED HELP IN WRITING CHECKS OR WITH OTHER MONEY MATTERS, CAN YOU HELP ME?
- PLEASE TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY.

## CONDUCTING A BACKGROUND CHECK.....

If you choose to find out if the person that you are considering for employment has broken the law (examples: shop lifting, traffic tickets, etc.), make sure that the person understands that you may choose to conduct a criminal background check. You will need the person's permission to do a background check. We've provided a sample form in APPENDIX D.

There are several ways you can conduct a background check.

- If you are enrolled in a self-directed program that provides financial management services, the Financial Management Service Agency may be able to help you with this. Check with your counselor.
- The Alabama Department of Motor Vehicles has a website link to private companies that provide background check services (<http://www.dmv.org/al-alabama/driving-records.php>). From DriversRecord.com, you can purchase a driving history record

(\$29.95) or from SentryLink you can purchase an instant **National Criminal Background Check** for \$19.95 (a comprehensive report showing felonies, misdemeanors, sex offenses and more at the state and county levels).

- Through the website of the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, [www.dps.state.al.us](http://www.dps.state.al.us), you can download, fill out, and submit “ABI Form 46-Release Form” to have an Alabama criminal record check processed. The individual you are doing the background check on will have to fill out the top portion of the form and you will have to fill out the bottom part of the release form. There is a \$25.00 fee for this service which must be payable in the form of a money order, cashiers check or a business check made to the AL Bureau of Investigation. Mail the release form and fee to ABI/Records Section, P. O. Box 1511, Montgomery, AL 36102. Contact the Records Section at (334)353-4333 if you have further questions.
- Usually free-of-charge or for a small fee, you can go to your local Sheriff’s office and they will conduct a background check for your county. All you have to do is bring in the signed background consent form with the signature of the personal assistant you want to hire. See this website to download a list of all Alabama sheriff’s offices with contact information: <http://www.alabar.org/members/AL%20sheriffs.pdf>

- There are many other places you can purchase a records check online. You can find them by doing a basic search for “background check” through any internet search engine (e.g. go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and search for “background check”). However, you may want to consider the reliability and professionalism of places you find this way.

**SEE APPENDIX D FOR A SAMPLE CONSENT FORM**

## SELECTING AND HIRING THE BEST EMPLOYEE .....

Selecting the best personal assistant match for you can be quite a challenge unless there is one applicant who has everything that you are looking for. Often you must make a very careful decision to choose between people who do not have quite everything that you are looking for. Here are some tips to consider when making your selection:

- Do not hire the first person that you interview unless you know that you have the “perfect match.” Interview several so that you have several to compare.
- Rate the applicants during the interview using your Ideal Personal Assistant checklist and make notes that will help you to keep them straight.

**SEE APPENDIX A FOR “MY IDEAL PERSONAL ASSISTANT CHECKLIST”**

- If all the applicants that you interviewed did well in the interview, then look at how you rated the five most important qualities and see which person stands out in those categories.

- Look very carefully at the references provided...listen to what was said about the individual from a past employer.
- If a family member or friend sat in on the interview, ask his or her opinion of what interaction he/she saw or felt from the applicants.
- The bottom line is to use your own best instincts and good judgment. You know the best fit for you. WHO DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST PERSON FOR YOUR JOB?
- Finally, consider if the person that you do not choose as your first choice could be used in your back-up plan. Ask: “If for some reason you are not hired to be my personal assistant, would you be interested in working as an emergency back-up?” This will help to build a support system of personal assistants for you in case of an emergency or the need to replace your personal assistant.



# **C**ONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

A contract or agreement between the personal assistant and the employer is very important because it is a means of formalizing the relationship and clearly defining the responsibilities of each party involved. Any agreement or contract should be flexible and should contain the main responsibilities and duties of the personal assistant as well as the employer. If the duties or responsibilities should change, the agreement should be updated. It is also good to review and update the agreement at least every six months. Other tasks should be clarified according to personal need. This agreement or contract protects both you and the personal assistant and provides a general working relationship guideline to follow.

**SEE APPENDIX E FOR SAMPLE EMPLOYEE AGREEMENTS FORMS**

# DEFINING AND ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIP ROLES

## DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP.....

When hiring a personal assistant, whether the applicant is a stranger or someone that you have known for a long time, please keep in mind that this is a professional relationship not a friendship. Treat the individual as a respected employee. This means that you know your responsibilities as well as those of the worker, and remember you are the one in charge. If you do not clearly define the relationship and keep it on an employer/employee basis, problems may easily arise. Maintain a pleasant, respectful relationship without trying to be “best friends.”

## SETTING BOUNDARIES.....

As you get to know your worker, it is very important to set the boundaries or limits on your relationship. Decide what you want from this relationship. Do you want a strictly business relationship or a friendly relationship? Many times, it is difficult to have both in the

employer/employee relationship. The business-like part of the relationship must be the main quality for the relationship to work successfully. Keep in mind that most problems will occur when the role of employer/employee is not clear or when the roles change.

Control is an issue in many relationships and generally means being in charge, managing, or overseeing. You are the employer or supervisor and YOU must stay in control. Control is not about being bossy and ordering the worker around. It is careful management and oversight of the worker's activities to make sure your goals are accomplished. It is important that you (not your employee) are in control of your situation -- your thoughts, feelings, emotions, and physical management.

Being the employer or the one in control means knowing how you should respond correctly to situations. Both you and your employee have the right to be treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. It is your responsibility to develop the relationship and to teach your worker what you expect at the beginning of the relationship. Tell them what you expect so that there are no misunderstandings or miscommunication. Work on developing very good communication skills between you and your worker and know that the longer that your worker stays with you, the more likely you will become friends. Even if this happens, maintain a professional distance to prevent the possibility of finding yourself in a difficult position.

## **Setting Boundaries with Family and Friends...**

It is just as important, and maybe more important, to set boundaries if you have hired a relative or friend to be your personal assistant. You want to avoid hurting your relationship with a family member or a friend just because you each had a different understanding about how your arrangement was going to work. When your friend or relative agrees to work with you, it might be helpful to sit down with him or her before the first day on the job to make sure you are on the same page. Before hand, think about what might look different in the way you talk to each other and act around each other when your sister is with you as your employee rather than as your sister, for example. When you sit down with her, describe your hopes for how your working relationship will help both of you, how it might look or feel different while she is working for you, and how you are going handle any disagreements that might come up. Talking about these things in advance allows you to set the right tone for your working relationship and sometime just talking about it before hand will be all it takes to help you avoid difficulties down the road.

# **T**RAINING YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANT

The type of training and the length of time needed to train your worker depend on your individual needs. Training your worker to meet your specific needs reduces confusion and allows you to get the best service.

If you are not comfortable training your personal assistant, you might ask someone who knows about your special needs to help train your new worker.

Ask your worker if he or she learns best by seeing, hearing, reading, hands-on or a combination of these forms when learning new tasks.

**If the worker learns best by:**

**SEEING ..... SHOW THEM HOW TO DO EACH PART OF THE JOB STEP BY STEP AND ALLOW THEM TO COPY YOUR ACTIONS.**

**HEARING .... TALK THEM THROUGH THE TASK STEP BY STEP AND USE PERSONAL STORIES OR HUMOR TO EXPLAIN THE TASK.**

**READING .... USE PICTURES, CHARTS, AND WRITTEN MATERIALS TO HELP TO EXPLAIN AND LEARN THE TASK.**

## **ORIENTATION TO YOU...**

WHEN TRAINING A NEW WORKER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEGIN TRAINING WITH INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF--WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOUR NEEDS ARE, YOUR LIKES, DISLIKES, AND WHAT MAKES UP YOUR LIFESTYLE.

## **PERSONAL ASSISTANT TRAINING CHECKLIST.....**

- ☐ Explain your disability and your needs in as much detail as you feel necessary for the worker to fully understand the role.
- ☐ Give step-by-step instructions for any tasks that your worker will be providing such as transfers from bed to chair. Explain any special terms. Emphasize the importance of doing tasks a certain way so that the worker understands why it is done that way and is more aware and careful when doing the task. Never assume that your personal assistant understands what you mean. Have personal assistants demonstrate they understand by explaining the procedure in their own words.
- ☐ Emphasize safety and emergency response. If your assistant needs to do more than call 911 in an emergency, train your worker on what he needs to know to handle an emergency; train him in the necessary procedures and practice the procedure on a regular schedule. Examples: fire and weather drills once every three or four months.

- ☐ Discuss the importance of confidentiality and privacy and what the legal responsibilities and consequences are if confidentiality is not kept by the worker.
- ☐ Explain how you expect the worker to behave while he or she is at work. Specify dress code, discuss having friends or family stop by to visit, telephone use during work hours, and use of your personal belongings such as the telephone, television, radio, computer, clothing or any other item that belongs to you.
- ☐ Review the work schedule and discuss where there might be a need to allow for flexibility. Discuss your process for completing, reviewing, and authorizing time sheets, and talk about how to request leave time. (Decide whether you will be writing in the time your personal assistant arrives and leaves or if that is one of your personal assistant's job responsibilities.)
- ☐ Explain any available benefits that come with your employment.
- ☐ Be patient with your worker and give him or her time to learn your routine. Try to put yourself in your worker's place and be aware of his/her feelings as you train them to work with you.
- ☐ Be consistent and logical with your training. Do not change a procedure or task without explaining why you made the change.
- ☐ Patiently correct your worker in private when he/she makes a mistake in a procedure or task. Do not raise your voice; instead, try to use a non-judgmental tone of voice.

- ☐ When your worker learns a new task or is doing a good job, be sure to give praise and positive reinforcement. You might be surprised how that will improve your worker's work performance.
- ☐ Review how you plan to evaluate the personal assistant's work performance and how often you will evaluate his/her work.

**SEE APPENDIX F FOR SAMPLE TRAINING TRACKER**



# **M**ANAGING AND RETAINING A GOOD PERSONAL ASSISTANT

*“Work Should Consist Of Getting Paid To Do What One Likes To Do Best And Would Do Regardless ... Even If There Was No Pay.”*

As an employer or supervisor, you will get the best results if you follow these simple rules:

1. Explain work rules clearly. Put rules in writing and post in a place where they can be seen.
2. Set clear and reasonable work expectations for your worker.
3. Do not expect your worker to perform tasks for which he/she has not been trained.

4. Problem solve with your worker as problems arise to find solutions that are agreeable to both of you.
5. Be available and willing to discuss your worker's concerns or questions.
6. Be flexible when possible and open to change if necessary.
7. Ask for the worker's thoughts and listen carefully and with an open mind to what your worker says about his/her employment.
8. Give sincere praise and compliments as often as possible.

## GOOD COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

Many people who work as personal assistants work for job satisfaction, not just money. Therefore, creating a comfortable work setting and having good communication are important in keeping a happy work environment that brings out the best in your worker. Listed below are keys to good communication:

- Give Exact Directions - Speak as clearly as possible and use words that your worker understands. Repeat yourself if necessary.
- Practice Being a Good Listener - Truly pay attention when your worker is talking. Let him/her know by comments, facial expressions, and body language that you think what is said is important. Repeat what you hear in your own words and ask questions to make sure the information you heard is correct.
- Give Positive Feedback - Give credit for good ideas and compliment your worker when appropriate suggestions are offered. Let the worker know that you are open to new ideas and value his/her opinions so that he/she will continue to offer them.

- Learn to be Flexible and Assertive - Remember that you are not always right and that a little give and take can benefit both you and your worker. Be flexible. Learn to say what you mean, and mean what you say in a way that expresses how you feel and what is important to you without insulting anyone else. Be direct, but be kind in your comments.
- Above All - Remember that your worker is not a mind reader and cannot know what you are thinking or what you expect if you do not fully say what you need. Discuss sensitive subjects privately. If the situation comes up, you may want to invite another person to be present to witness what is said. That way, no one misunderstands what is being discussed. Put in writing the tasks that you want done so that you can check them off as they are discussed. Keep communication lines open; do not stop talking to your worker if you are upset. Always take a moment, or several moments, if you need some time to think about your reaction to a situation and what you want to say. Select the appropriate time and tone of voice to discuss unpleasant topics, but do address the small irritations before they become big problems.

▪ COMMUNICATE.....**COMMUNICATE....COMMUNICATE.....**

## CREATING A POSITIVE WORK PLACE

No one wants to work in an unfriendly, unsafe, or unclean place, so creating a pleasant, safe, clean, and enjoyable work place is essential to a good work experience. Your worker needs to feel appreciated and valued as your employee, and it is your responsibility to make sure that the work place is as comfortable as possible for your employee.

Positive Points to Remember:

- Be consistent with your worker. Make sure the duties, responsibilities, and the results that you want are understood. Provide specific examples and written schedules and checklists.
- Show appreciation often. Use praise and tokens of appreciation like snacks, a soft drink, or even a thank you card when appropriate.

- Treat your worker with respect, kindness, politeness, honesty, patience, and trust. Treat them just as you want to be treated.
- Talk with your worker and listen to what he or she has to say. Watch what motivates him/her and discuss feelings about the work place. Stay open to suggestions for changes that are felt would improve the work place.
- If you are unhappy with the worker's performance of a task, explain immediately how you would like it done. Be open, honest, and tactful. Offer constructive criticism, not just criticism.
- Respect your worker's privacy and do not press for information about his/her private life. Do not disturb your worker during off time unless there is an absolute emergency.
- Let your worker know that you care about feelings, well-being, and overall satisfaction with the work place. This is the main key to a good working relationship.

# SUPERVISION TOOLS

## PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK .....

The only way that your worker will know how he/she is performing on the job is for you to give constructive feedback. Giving constructive feedback means letting your worker know if he/she is doing the assigned tasks the way that you expect and want him/her to do them. It is telling the worker what you like and giving praise when a task is done well. It is also good to praise the worker when something is done for you that is especially pleasing or helps you feel more comfortable. Give sincere compliments for tasks performed correctly and say “thank you.” Express to your worker what you like about the action and why. This reinforces good work habits for your worker.

If your worker does not perform a task to your satisfaction, explain to him/her exactly how you would like the task to be done and show them how to do it correctly as soon as possible.

- Correct your assistant as privately as possible, use a calm tone of voice, and focus on your dissatisfaction with the task, not on the worker as a person.
- Be brief when correcting your worker. Do not exaggerate the poor performance and once you have made your point, do not say it over and over again.
- Avoid becoming angry, overly emotional or totally frustrated. Exercise a sense of humor and let your worker know that you realize that he/she is human.
- Keep in mind how you would want someone to correct and talk to you. Help your worker realize that you do value him/her as an employee and as a person; that you want to make recommendations about how his/her performance can be improved for his/her professional benefit as well as to better meet your needs.



## **COACHING YOUR WORKER .....**

Coaching is a supervision style that helps your worker learn how to solve problems, put first things first, make good decisions, and communicate effectively. Coaching helps to retain your worker longer, to ease tension, and focuses on problem solving. The use of coaching involves your worker in developing solutions to problems. Coaching steps are to:

### **1) Build Relationships.**

- a. Begin your work with your worker with the goal of creating a relationship for the long-term.

### **2) State Problems.**

- a. When issues come up, make sure to address them as soon as possible.
- b. Have the worker sit down with you to focus on the issue.
- c. State the facts of the issue and the problem(s) it has caused.

### **3) Understand the Worker's Perspective.**

- a. Ask the worker to tell you his or her side of the issue.

**4) Explain Your Perspective.**

- a. Tell the worker why this is an issue for you.

**5) Practice Solution Building.**

- a. Think together of ways that the problem can be fixed.

**6) Take Action Steps.**

- a. Decide what you are going to do to try to keep the problem from happening again.
- b. Based on what you decide, both you and your worker will have responsibilities and action steps.

**7) Follow-Up on Solution.**

- a. After a while, sit back down again to discuss whether the action steps worked or not. If the steps did not work, choose a new way to address the problem and follow-up again.

## **AVOIDING PERSONAL ASSISTANT BURNOUT .....**

Working as a personal assistant is not an easy job and can be very stressful. Burnout can happen quickly and is often a response to job stress. Burnout prevention is the best defense, and the following tips to prevent burnout might keep you from having to recruit, hire, and train a new worker any time soon.

- ❖ Try to include variety and be flexible with the work schedule.
- ❖ Use your backup workers from time to time to provide some time off for your primary worker and encourage the primary worker to take the time offered to do things that are fun, exciting, and fulfilling to him/her as a person.
- ❖ Practice good communication between you and your worker. This will prevent dissatisfaction at the onset and will help to prevent burnout.
- ❖ Support career growth opportunities for your personal assistant by setting aside time and funds for the worker to attend training and continuing education courses.

# EVALUATING YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Evaluation of your worker's performance is done to monitor and to improve the quality of services provided. The first evaluation should be done as soon as the initial training is completed. After the first evaluation, the general rule is every six months. Informally on a daily basis, you should evaluate the performance of your worker. Some points to remember when performing an employee evaluation are:

- ❖ Use the communication, coaching, and supervision skills that you have learned from this manual.
- ❖ Use an official Worker Evaluation Form.
- ❖ Do the formal evaluation in writing and give the worker a copy; keep one for your records.

- ❖ Have the evaluation done ahead of the meeting so that you are prepared and are comfortable talking about it with your worker.
- ❖ Use the evaluation as an opportunity to listen and learn what you can do to better support your worker as well as to discuss ideas to improve your worker's performance.

**A SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM IS PROVIDED IN APPENDIX G**

# QUALITY CHECKS

## ESTABLISHING AN EMERGENCY BACK-UP PLAN .....

No matter how well planned your schedule may be, there will be times when your personal assistant cannot be with you due to personal emergencies, illness, bad weather or vacation. For this reason, you need to have other people you can call. You may use family or friends or paid and non-paid workers. The main point is to have back-up when your primary worker is not available.

Points to remember about your Back-Up Personal Assistant Plan:

1. Establish a back-up plan!
2. Identify at least TWO people who can serve as a back-up worker. Make sure you have their names and contact information written down in a place where it can be easily found. It also will help to have written down when they are or not

available to work. (For example, your first back up, Margaret, might only be available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.)

3. Make sure that the two people identified agree to serve as back-up workers and also agree to receive personal assistant services training.
4. Know how you intend to compensate the back-up workers for services provided (whether they will fill in for you as a volunteer or whether they need to be paid and how much).
5. Know how you intend to train the back-up workers and document how well they do the tasks you need.
6. Document any limitations that any of the back-up people may have in terms of tasks that they can or cannot perform.
7. Have a timeline for revisiting your back-up plan to keep it current. Keep both your back-up plan and your agreement with your back-up workers current—ask them every six months or so if they are still willing to be part of your back-up plan.

**A workable back-up plan is essential to keeping your independence and ability to control your life.**

## **ESTABLISHING A SAFETY PLAN WITH YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANT.....**

Every home needs a safety and evacuation plan in the event of fire, dangerous weather or a threat to personal safety. Your personal assistant needs to be familiar with your safety and evacuation plan and what to do in the event of any type of home, personal, or medical emergency.

**The following suggestions help to provide a good safety and evacuation plan for your home:**

- Design a fire and safety plan and go over it with your assistant.
- Go over the plan with the personal assistant and conduct regularly scheduled fire/weather drills. Make sure the worker knows the location of fire extinguishers and how to use them. Do role playing of calling 911 and how to respond to other emergencies.
- Let your worker know who to call and in what order if you have an emergency. Post information in LARGE print in full view.



- Make sure that your worker is trained in basic first aid and safety and can respond if you have a medical emergency.
- Train your worker on how your equipment works and how to best assist you in using all of your equipment.
- Teach your worker how to use your alarm system, telephones, how to lock your doors and windows, and/or any other equipment in your home that is designed for personal safety.

#### **PROTECTING YOURSELF.....**

- ❖ You have the right to receive personal assistance without being taken advantage of financially or sexually and to end relationships where you feel threatened or in danger. If you feel that a worker's behavior is inappropriate, report it to someone that you trust.

- ❖ Keep your windows and doors locked. If you think that someone is trying to get into your home, call 911.
  
- ❖ Remember that no one should touch you where you do not want to be touched. If you receive an unwanted sexual touch from a personal assistant, it is a violation of professional ethics codes, your rights, and the law. Report the incident to the appropriate agency or to a trusted individual immediately.
  
- ❖ Have a trusted family member or friend manage things that you do not feel comfortable having your personal assistant manage such as your check book, bill paying or other financial matters. Let your personal assistant know that your family and friends are watching out for your well-being.
  
- ❖ Also keep trusted neighbors informed of your schedule and ask that they, too, keep an eye on you and your home.

## PROTECTING YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY .....

- Before you hire a personal assistant, make an inventory of valuable items. List the date of purchase and the original price. Save receipts and serial numbers if possible. Take photographs or a video of your valuables and give a copy of the list and pictures or video to your insurance agent, family, or friend or put a copy in a safe deposit box.
- Mark valuable items with an engraving pen. This helps the police to recover them if stolen.
- Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place. Let your worker know that you are aware of your surroundings and where things belong in casual conversation.
- Keep an inventory of food items. This will keep purchasing costs down.
- If you fire a personal assistant, check your telephone bill to make sure that no unapproved calls were charged by your ex-worker.

- Check credit card bills and other credit to make sure no unauthorized charges were made. If you allowed your assistant to withdraw money from your ATM, change your PIN number.
- If you give your worker a set of extra keys, make sure they say “DO NOT COPY” on them. After firing, be sure to get your keys from the worker when he/she leaves. Change your locks if the worker does not return your keys. It might be a good idea to change locks each time you change workers because copies of keys can be made easily sometimes even if they say “DO NOT COPY” on them.
- Do not encourage your worker’s friend or family to visit them at your home.

# I**Important Information for You as an Employer**

## **Is My Personal Assistant Covered by Federal Labor Laws?**

Personal assistants can be classified two ways -- one way as an employee who provides “domestic services” and the other as an employee who provides “companionship services.” Domestic service providers ARE covered by federal labor laws but companionship service providers typically are not. Even though the employment of personal assistants by the person who is receiving the services is fairly new territory in the legal world, experts nationally have agreed that personal assistant services would most likely be considered a domestic service.

### *Why is this important?*

If your personal assistant is considered an employee who provides you with domestic services, and domestic services are covered by federal labor laws, then you are responsible for meeting certain requirements that have been put in place to ensure that employees are treated fairly. This will affect how records are kept, how you fire your personal assistant if needed, and how overtime is paid, for examples.

## EMPLOYMENT RECORDS THAT YOU NEED TO KEEP ON FILE .....

You are responsible for keeping correct and up to date records for your Personal Assistant. This includes records of the time that your worker works as well as all the forms that you used to hire, train, supervise, evaluate, and fire your worker.

You will need to keep the following records on file, confidential and up to date at all times:

- Employment application
  - Including the worker's full name, social security number, birth date, gender, mailing address and street address if different, and phone contact information
- Job Description
- Social Security Card (Copy)
- Certificate of Training
- Contract
  - A signed agreement that reflects the worker has agreed to perform the duties listed in the job description if separate from the agreement.

- Copy of Driver's License ( if applicable)
- References Contacted
- Insurance (if applicable)
- Background Check (if applicable)

You will also need to set up a file for time keeping and payroll records. For further information, visit: [www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/whd/whdfs21.htm](http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/whd/whdfs21.htm).

*Other documents should also be kept related to the number of hours the worker actually works and how he/she got paid for that time.*

- Copies of Time Sheets
- General Supervision Notes
- Evaluations
- Type of Payment and Proof of Payment

## **SCHEDULING YOUR WORKER'S WORK WEEK .....**

You may set the work week any way that you want, but you need to be consistent and keep it on the same schedule that you start with. You cannot begin one week with Friday, and then begin the next week on Monday. If you begin the work week on Monday, it needs to stay on Monday. The Department of Labor requires a set workweek primarily for the purpose of figuring overtime pay. Overtime must be paid anytime that an individual works more than forty hours in a workweek.

**SEE APPENDIX H FOR SAMPLE TIME SHEET**

Therefore, for each week that the worker works, you need to keep a copy of his or her timesheet that lists the total number of hours worked that week. There will also need to be a copy or report of how much the worker got paid for that week. If the worker worked more than 40 hours during the workweek, the record will need to indicate how many hours over were worked and the paycheck or stub will need to indicate the payment he/she received for



the extra hours. If you are a participant in a self-directed program, this may be something the financial management agency can help you with.

### **How Long To Keep Records .....**

According to federal labor laws, some records listed above must be kept for two years and others for three. Medicaid currently requires home and community-based waiver funded records to be kept for six (6) years. To keep things simple, it is recommended that all records are kept for six years. That means, for example, that you cannot throw out the timesheet your personal assistant filled out for the week August 1-7, 2007 until August 8, 2013 or you can't throw out the employment application and agreement for a worker who worked for you for several months in 2006 until 2012.

### **Workweek Hours and Overtime .....**

When your employee is covered by labor laws, he/she is entitled to breaks during the work day including a short rest period as well as a meal break. Rest periods of 20 minutes or less are typically allowed in the middle of a four-hour work period. These rest periods are

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paid as time worked. Meal breaks are typically 30-60 minutes are not considered time worked. This means that a personal assistant would not sign out (or clock out) for a rest period, but would sign out for meal breaks (and sign back in when the meal break is over).

Your personal assistant must work more than 40 hours in a single work week before overtime rules kick in. Overtime rules say that for each hour an employee works over those first 40 hours, he/she should receive pay that is equal to one-and-a-half times more than the normal rate. For example, if you pay your personal assistant \$7 per hour for the first 40 hours in the week and he/she works overtime, you should pay the personal assistant \$7.00 plus \$3.50 or \$10.50 per hour for each extra hour.

### **Travel .....**

The travel from the personal assistant's home to your home, the personal assistant's workplace, is not considered work time.

Paying for on-the-job travel may be allowed, for example to transport you to the grocery or the pharmacy, but it depends on the rules of the program you get funding from, if any. Of course, if you are a participant in a program that doesn't allow it or you don't get

publicly funded services at all, you can choose to pay for on-the-job transportation services out of your own pocket. Regardless of how this service is paid for, before you have your personal assistant drive you anywhere, it's a good idea to make sure he/she has a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. You may want to make copies and keep them in your worker's personnel file.

### **Training Costs .....**

There may be specific training that you want your personal assistant to receive or your personal assistant may be interested in getting training for his or her own career growth. The time to attend the training can be considered part of the worker's job if it is:

1. during regular work hours
2. required training to continue in the job
3. related specifically to the worker's job

Therefore, if these three things are true, you can pay for the worker's time to attend the training. If it is in your budget, you also may consider paying for the registration cost of the training itself.

### **What If I Need to Terminate My Personal Assistant's Employment? .....**

If you decide that the personal assistant you've chosen is not a right fit, you have the right to end the relationship with him or her. However, you must be careful to not do anything that would disagree with the original terms of your agreement.

If the personal assistant agreement that both you and your worker signed says, for example, that you will give your worker a written warning if he/she is doing something (or not doing something) that puts him/her at risk for losing his/her job, then you have to do that first before you can fire. Or if the agreement says that you will give the worker two weeks' notice before termination, then you must follow that and give your worker two weeks' notice.

Alabama uses a rule called "employment-at-will" that also applies to your relationship with your worker. "Employment-at-will" means that your worker has agreed to work with

you until you or your worker decides to change the arrangement, for whatever reason. Of course, the reason can never be that you are discriminating against your worker (firing because of race or religion, for examples) or that you are punishing the worker for something he/she legally had a right to do. Mostly, you want to just treat your worker fairly.

### **Firing Your Worker .....**

If you decide that firing your worker is your only option, there are certain steps you should follow. But before that, you want to make sure you have tried hard to work out any differences and problems that have occurred. Also, you want to make sure that when you tried to work out problems, you wrote down notes or documented the effort in some way.

### ***Letting Your Worker Go with Self-Respect***

To protect yourself, to be professional and to avoid stress, consider the following recommendations when you hold the termination meeting with your worker:

- Any time you have to fire someone, it should be done face-to-face unless you are concerned for your safety. In that case, contact your counselor for assistance.
- Keep calm
- Do not raise your voice
- Simply state the facts; try to leave emotion out of it
- Hold the meeting in the morning and/or early in the week (NOT on a Friday or the day before a holiday or vacation)

*Conduct Your Termination Meeting with these Steps*

1. Invite the worker to sit down with you
2. Tell the worker you have thought a lot about this decision but unfortunately, you will need to terminate his/her employment with you
3. Tell the worker that your decision is final and nothing can change your mind
4. Tell the worker when his/her last day is
5. Review with the worker any benefits due to him/her

6. Be prepared for the worker to want to leave immediately when you tell him or her that he/she is being fired
7. You may wish for the worker to leave immediately after your termination meeting. Tell the worker that you expect them to collect his/her belongings and leave when the meeting is finished.
8. Have the worker's final paycheck ready. Make sure it includes any payment for unused leave.
9. End the meeting by telling the worker that you will contact him or her if any other things come up that must be discussed.
10. Wish the worker good luck for the future, professionally and personally if you wish.
11. You may choose to also give the worker a written notice. This is a formal step to simply document the date of the termination. It should be as brief as possible and state only that employment is being terminated and the date the termination is effective. There should be no reasons given for the termination.

### **What if My Personal Assistant Resigns? .....**

If your personal assistant tells you that he or she is leaving, you should set up a time to discuss it with them. Follow the same steps you would if you were the one terminating the employment as described in the above section. It is important to understand why your worker is leaving. You should also encourage the worker to tell you why he/she is leaving and ask the worker to give you notice in writing. The information about why he/she is leaving may:

- Be useful if the worker later files for unemployment
- Help you to understand how you can be a better employer or supervisor. (If the personal assistant tells you the reason is something that you disagree with, try to keep your emotions in check and not to react. Let the worker have his/her say and give yourself time to think it over privately to consider whether there might be any truth to it.)



# Appendices

## APPENDIX I

### SUPPORT NETWORK CHECKLIST

Most people depend on each other to meet a lot of the needs in their lives. Having a network of support around us improves the quality of our lives. Knowing who we can turn to and count on, for little things and big things, is a safety net. Use this checklist to help identify those people who are in your network of support. This is **for your use only**, so you won't be sharing anyone's private information. You can also add to it or change it whenever you need to.

<b>Who are the people in my network of support?</b>
---

	Name	Phone Number	Comments
Relatives			
Friends			
Neighbors			
People from my church			

## APPENDIX I

People in my clubs or organizations			
Delivery people			
People I pay for the work they do for me			
Other people in my life			

Who I can call on if...
-------------------------

	Name	Phone Number	Comments
I want to go to church			
I want to go shopping			
I have an emergency when my attendant is not available			

## APPENDIX I

<b>My attendant calls in sick for a day or so</b>			
<b>My attendant needs to take some longer time off</b>			
<b>I just need a meal prepared occasionally</b>			
<b>I feel the need for some companionship</b>			
<b>I just feel like talking</b>			
<b>I need to talk about something serious or something I'm worried about</b>			
<b>I need a ride to a meeting or an appointment</b>			

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the value of having significant existing Alabama resources from which to assemble this document. This handbook was assembled from various existing sources including Alabama Easter Seals' **PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT SERVICES: A HANDBOOK FOR ACCESSING AND USING PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT SERVICES** and Wright and Associates' **TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES: Orientation Manual for Participants in the Service Responsibility Option -- It's Your Choice: Deciding How To Manage Your Personal Assistant Services**.

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August 2007

**APPENDIX A**  
**My Ideal Personal Assistant Checklist**  
*Characteristics I Want My Assistant to Have*

<b>CHARACTERISTIC OR SKILL</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>IT DOESN'T MATTER</b>	<b>THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY (CHOOSE 5)</b>
<b>Mind's if I smoke</b>				
<b>Mind's if I drink</b>				
<b>Quiet</b>				
<b>Talkative</b>				
<b>Sense of Humor</b>				
<b>Speaks my first language</b>				
<b>Reads and writes well</b>				
<b>Doesn't need lots of direction</b>				
<b>Likes dogs</b>				
<b>Likes cats</b>				
<b>Likes plants</b>				
<b>Has reliable transportation</b>				
<b>Computer literate</b>				
<b>Likes to socialize</b>				
<b>Good cleaner</b>				
<b>Good cook</b>				
<b>Good launderer</b>				
<b>Physically strong</b>				
<b>Adventurous</b>				
<b>Likes to plan</b>				
<b>Likes to stick to a schedule</b>				
<b>Likes to be spontaneous</b>				
<b>Other:</b>				
<b>Other:</b>				
<b>Other:</b>				

# APPENDIX A

## My Ideal Personal Assistant

### Interview Notes

<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>Name: #1</b> _____	<b>Name: #2</b> _____	<b>Name: #3</b> _____	<b>Notes</b>
Put a star (*) in the box if the person you are interviewing has the characteristic or skill you are looking for. You can put more than one star in a box if you really liked what the worker said during the interview about that characteristic or skill. When you are finished interviewing,, add up the number of stars in each column. The one who has the most stars will most likely be the best match for your Ideal Personal Assistant Use the Notes column to make notes to your self. You don't have to fill in a star or notes for every characteristic or skill, only those that are most important to you. You can add Other characteristics and skills that aren't already listed at the bottom.				
Mind's if I smoke				
Mind's if I drink				
Quiet				
Talkative				
Sense of humor				
Speaks my first language				
Reads and writes well				
Doesn't need lots of direction				
Likes dogs				
Likes cats				
Likes plants				
Has reliable transportation				
Computer literate				
Likes to socialize				
Good cleaner				
Good cook				
Good launderer				
Physically strong				
Adventurous				
Likes to plan				
Likes to stick to a schedule				
Likes to be spontaneous				
Other:				
Other:				
<b>TOTAL</b>				



## APPENDIX B

# **SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **JOB TITLE:**

Personal Care Worker.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

To assist an individual with a disability in performing activities of daily living including feeding, bathing, dressing, bowel and bladder management, transfers from bed to wheelchair, light house keeping, and other tasks as requested. The job involves lifting and bending and a limited amount of travel.

### **HOURS:**

Weekday hours - Monday through Friday, 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

### **EDUCATION - TRAINING - EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:**

High school diploma or GED (preferred but not required) and completion of certified nursing worker program is also preferred but not required. Must be willing to learn. Training will be provided for the first two to three days with a negotiated hourly pay rate while in training.

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

### **SKILLS:**

- Must be able to read and write.
- Must be at work on time.
- Must be able to keep confidentiality.
- Good organizational skills.
- Must be able to follow written and spoken instructions.

## APPENDIX B

### KNOWLEDGE:

- A working knowledge of the signs and symptoms of common illnesses and disabilities.
- A working knowledge of first aid, safety, and emergency procedures.
- A combination of experience, education, skill and knowledge will be considered for employment.

### TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION:

**Example: *Full or Part Time:*** Weekday assistant receives salary of \$7.50 per hour to be paid on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. A free garage apartment with paid utilities and cable is also included if desired.

### PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:

At three months followed by every six months.

## APPENDIX C

# Sample Personal Assistant Application

All information on this application will be kept confidential. Please print all information.

### Personal information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different from above:

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone numbers (include area code)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address if available: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a Social Security card? ( ) yes ( ) no

Do you have a valid driver's license? ( ) yes ( ) no

Can you perform the duties of the job described in the attached job description  
with or without reasonable accommodation? ( ) yes ( ) no ( ) uncertain

Have you worked with people with disabilities? ( ) yes ( ) no

If yes, what did you do? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any training or experience you have had as a PCA:

Are you seeking (check all that apply)

( ) part time work? ( ) permanent work? ( ) temporary work?

Will you work as a live-in PCA? ( ) yes ( ) no

What hours/days are you available to work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If there are certain times you cannot work, please list them: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you able to assist an individual with a disability with transportation?

( ) yes ( ) no

### Education

Highest grade completed: \_\_\_\_\_ GED: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Special training: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### **Past Employment** (please list your last three employers)

1. Employer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date employment began: \_\_\_\_\_ Date employment ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number of supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Employer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date employment began: \_\_\_\_\_ Date employment ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number of supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Employer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date employment began: \_\_\_\_\_ Date employment ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number of supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

If there is a past employer that you do not wish to have contacted, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Please give two references, other than a relative:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation? ( ) yes ( ) no

Would you submit to a criminal background check? ( ) yes ( ) no

Applicant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### Background Consent Form

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize  
PRINT NAME OF PERSON GIVING CONSENT

\_\_\_\_\_ and/or its agents  
PRINT NAME OF EMPLOYER

to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, criminal or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my application and/or obtaining other information which may be material to my qualifications for employment, which may include Urine Substance Abuse Testing.

I release \_\_\_\_\_ and/or its agents and my person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims or law suits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

The following is my true and complete legal name and all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

<b>Signature Full Name</b>

<b>Maiden Name or Other Names Used</b>

<b>Current Address (Street, City, State, Zip)</b>	<b>How Long?</b>

<b>Former Address</b>	<b>How Long?</b>

<b>Date of Birth:</b>	<b>Social Security #:</b>

<b>Driver's License Number:</b>	<b>State of License:</b>

## APPENDIX E

# Sample Agreement 1

It is understood that the personal care attendant will carry out the duties and responsibilities listed in the job description.

Both the attendant and the employer will treat each other with mutual respect.

Both will attempt to be flexible and work in solving problems as they arise.

The attendant agrees to work the following schedule of work and time off:

Hours/days off:\_\_\_\_\_

Hours/days to be worked:\_\_\_\_\_

Salary includes room, board, utilities, phone and \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week  
and/or \$\_\_\_\_\_ per \_\_\_\_\_.

Two weeks notice will be given by either person regarding termination of this agreement. This is an employment-at-will agreement \_\_\_\_\_(employer) can fire or terminate the personal care attendant with or without cause with two weeks notice. The personal care attendant may terminate employment with two weeks notice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of PCA Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of employer Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Review date

## APPENDIX E

# Sample Agreement 2

This agreement between

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Participant (print)

and

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Personal Assistant (print)

is written and signed to make the terms of employment clear.

### ***PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES:***

#### **Compensation**

The Participant\* agrees to pay the Personal Assistant \$\_\_\_per hour.

#### **Taxes**

The Participant will pay the Participant's portion of all federal and state government unemployment taxes, social security and Medicare taxes. The Participant's Fiscal Employer Agent (FEA) will send you a summary of income and income tax payroll withholdings (the W2 Form) by January 31st for the previous calendar year.

#### **Selection and Dismissal**

The Participant is the employer of record. This means that the Participant has the right to select and hire the Personal Assistant and the right to dismiss and fire the Personal Assistant. The Participant is responsible for notifying the FEA of these decisions as they happen.

#### **Training**

The Participant will provide training to the Personal Assistant on the service tasks the Personal Assistant is expected to do. The Participant will make sure that the Personal Assistant learns the tasks and can do them well.

#### **Supervision and Evaluation**

The Participant will give daily instructions to the Personal Assistant. The Participant will tell the Personal Assistant when he/she is doing something well or not. The Participant will help find ways for the Personal Assistant to get better if needed. The Participant will fill-out an evaluation form to provide written feedback to the Personal Assistant. The Participant will talk through any problems with the Personal Assistant so they can solve them together.

#### **Safety**

The Participant will make sure that his/her home is a safe working environment. This means that walkways will be clear, emergency exits are easy to get through, and the house is free of obvious dangers that might cause injury or illness.

### ***PERSONAL ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES:***

## APPENDIX E

Please initial:

- \_\_\_ I have truthfully represented my abilities and qualifications to the Participant.
- \_\_\_ I agree to report to work on time.
- \_\_\_ I agree to carry out assigned duties and responsibilities as explained by my Participant.
- \_\_\_ I agree to tell my Participant two weeks in advance when I need time off. Vacations dates will be set by mutual agreement between the Participant and me.
- \_\_\_ I agree to call my Participant with as much advance notice as possible if I am ill or if I am unable to report to work on time due to emergencies (car trouble, severe weather, etc.).
- \_\_\_ I understand I am expected to be dependable.
- \_\_\_ I agree to give my Participant two weeks written notice if I decide to terminate my employment agreement.
- \_\_\_ I agree to provide services in a safe, courteous and professional manner.
- \_\_\_ I agree to respect the choices the Participant makes and the direction he/she gives me.
- \_\_\_ I know that if I am responsible for any physical, sexual or mental abuse or neglect of the Participant it will result in the immediate termination of this Agreement and be reported to State authorities.
- \_\_\_ I agree to work according to the service schedule on the next page.
- \_\_\_ I agree to only provide services that are listed and approved in the Participant's Personal Support Plan.
- \_\_\_ I understand that I will not be paid until the Participant has signed the appropriate time sheets, acknowledging their correctness.
- \_\_\_ I understand I am responsible for turning in my signed timesheets to the FEA two times a month.

**Personal Assistant Start Date:** \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

This date cannot be earlier than the date this agreement was signed.



## APPENDIX E

### SERVICE SCHEDULE

The Personal Assistant's work schedule will be as follows:

*(Please place in each box the total amount of minutes or hours to be spent for each task. If the schedule is different from week to week, please complete a chart for each week that it is different and indicate which week of the month it is for).*

☐ Weekly Schedule   ☐ Week 1 Schedule   ☐ Week 2 Schedule   ☐ Week 3 Schedule   ☐ Week 4 Schedule

TASKS	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
BATHING							
GROOMING							
DRESSING							
TOILETING							
MEAL PREPARATION							
EATING/FEEDING							
MEAL CLEAN UP							
HOUSE CLEANING							
SHOPPING							
EXERCISING							
TRANSFERS /REPOSITIONING							
ASSISTANCE WITH EQUIPMENT							
COMMUNICATION							
TRANSPORTATION FOR ERRANDS							
HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT							
OTHER:							
OTHER:							
OTHER:							
OTHER:							
TOTAL # OF HOURS FOR EACH DAY							
SCHEDULE FOR EACH DAY (example: 10AM – 2PM)							

***I have read and understand the job duties expected of me.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Personal Assistant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Representative's Signature *(if applicable)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX E

### Sample Agreement 3

This is an agreement between \_\_\_\_\_ (Employer) and \_\_\_\_\_  
(Assistant) for providing personal assistance, starting on \_\_\_\_\_ (Date).

#### Work Schedule

The assistant shall work a total of \_\_\_\_\_ hours weekly. The assistant shall work the following days of each week: \_\_\_\_\_

The assistant shall work the following hours on each day noted above:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Work Responsibilities

The assistant is responsible for performing the tasks on the “Job Description” attached to the back of this contract.

#### Salary

The employer will pay the assistant \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per \_\_\_\_\_. Room and Board is/is not (circle one) included in the assistant’s salary. The assistant will be paid every \_\_\_\_\_. The assistant may use the following things owned by the employer.

#### Leave Time

The assistant will be given \_\_\_\_\_ days of paid/unpaid vacation each year. Use of vacation days must be arranged at least \_\_\_\_\_ weeks in advance. The assistant will receive \_\_\_\_\_ days of paid/unpaid holiday leave. The assistant will receive \_\_\_\_\_ days of paid/unpaid sick leave per year.

If the assistant is not able to come to work, or will be late for work, the assistant must notify the employer of immediately. If necessary, the assistant will help the employer with the necessary phone calls to arrange for a substitute.

## APPENDIX E

### Other Compensation

The employer shall be responsible for the following expenses:

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### Evaluations

The assistant will be evaluated by the employer every \_\_\_\_\_. The assistant will be given a written copy of the evaluation. The evaluation will include areas of good performance and areas where improvement is needed.

The assistant will be given warning for poor performance. If the assistant receives \_\_\_\_\_ warnings about the same thing, the employer will \_\_\_\_\_.

Amendments: Any item of this contract may be changed at any time by mutual agreement of the employer and the assistant.

### Termination:

The assistant will give \_\_\_\_\_ weeks notice of intent to quit. The employer will give \_\_\_\_\_ weeks notice of intent to terminate the employee.

In the event that the assistant \_\_\_\_\_, the assistant will be terminated without notice. In the even that the employer \_\_\_\_\_, the assistant may quit without notice.

### Personal Liability

The assistant may not do the following things in the employer's home or car:

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The employer may not do the following things when the assistant is present:

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### Taxes and Insurance

## APPENDIX E

The \_\_\_\_\_ will be responsible for payment of federal, state, and local taxes. The \_\_\_\_\_ will be responsible for maintaining appropriate insurance. The assistance will/will not (circle one) be responsible for bond insurance.

Other

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

Employer

\_\_\_\_\_

Assistant

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness

## APPENDIX E

# Sample Agreement 4

### Employee Responsibilities:

#### Reporting To Work/Time Off

(Please Initial)

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to report to work on time.

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to carry out assigned duties and responsibilities as explained by my employer.

I \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to tell my employer two weeks in advance when I need time off.

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to call my employer with as much advance notice as possible if I am ill or if I am unable to report to work on time due to other unforeseen emergencies (care trouble, severe weather, etc.)

I \_\_\_\_\_ understand I am expected to be dependable.

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to give my employer two weeks written notice if I decide to terminate my employment agreement.

I have read and understand the job duties expected of me.

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Signature of Employee

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Date

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Signature of Employer

---

Date

## APPENDIX E

# Sample Agreement 5

### EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES:

#### **Compensation**

The employer agrees to pay the employee \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per hour.

This employer will withhold and send to federal and state governments all unemployment taxes, social security, federal withholdings. A summary of all payroll withholdings (W2 Form) will be sent to you by the project bookkeeper by January 31<sup>st</sup> for the previous calendar year.

#### **Job Duties**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F

### TRAINING TRACKER

Task	Describe How Task Is To Be Completed	When/How Often?	Describe Equipment or Adaptive Aid Needed, If Any	Date(s) Training Completed	Evaluation <i>1 week after training, note whether task has been learned or if further training is needed.</i>
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Needs More Training Plan for additional training:
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Needs More Training Plan for additional training:
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Needs More Training Plan for additional training:
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Learned <input type="checkbox"/> Needs More Training Plan for additional training:

## APPENDIX G

### PERSONAL ASSISTANT EVALUATION FORM

Date of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation Period: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation Items	Acceptable	Needs Improvement
Arrives on time		
Quality of assigned work		
Uses work hours appropriately		
Courteous and tactful to me and my family		
Accepts my supervision in a cooperative manner		
Cooperates with others involved in my care		
Maintains my confidentiality		
Personal appearance is acceptable		
Is able to adjust to changes in my routine without complaint		
Completes timesheets in a timely manner		
Respects my environment and cares for my safety and well-being		

**Comments:**

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- ☐ I am satisfied with the services and want to continue employment of this assistant.
- ☐ I feel that more training is required and another evaluation is to be scheduled in 60 days.
- ☐ I am not satisfied with the services of this assistant and want to change assistants. If terminating assistant, please document reason:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

**Assistant Comments:**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Signature/Date



## APPENDIX H

### SAMPLE TIME SHEET

Employer				Phone			
Attendant				Phone			
Week Beginning							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Date							
Beginning Time							
Break							
Ending Time							
Total Hours/Day							
Notes							
Total Hours/Week							
Employer's Signature							
Attendant's Signature							
Attendant's Social Security Number							